



Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea

Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet

Erica Kirchner Uses Jeweler's Saw to Create Animal Sculptures from Copper at Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea

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Contact: Gwen Heffner

Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea

859-985-5448

gwen.heffner@ky.gov debby.giannini@ky.gov

BEREA, Ky. – Tucked away on a 420-acre farm in Jefferson County, metal artist Erica Kirchner lives surrounded by a natural habitat that is home to the pond, field and woodland creatures that inspire her work. Hidden in the contours of the hills, her small log home has housed several cats, and even doves. Any critter that ventures into Kirchner's studio finds itself fair game for mimicry.

Kirchner explains, "If I can fold paper and make an animal, it can be done in metal."

Kirchner will demonstrate use of the jeweler's saw to create her copper animal sculptures on Saturday, June 22, from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea.

Kirchner constructs her small animals by hand from flat sheets of copper and copper tubing. The copper is cut with a jeweler's saw, hammered, manipulated, and when necessary, assembled using solder and brazing techniques and an acetylene torch. The matte green-gray finish is made by brushing copper nitrate over the metal for a verdigris patina. Some of her animals she paints in realistic colors.

Kirchner is a graduate of the Ringling School of Art and Design in Florida and the University of Louisville. While she has background in a variety of art forms, her focus is on sculpting with copper. In 2004, Kirchner created a line of "Blue Dogs" – miniature copper sculptures that captured the essence of individual breeds of dogs. Following the success of her "Blue Dogs" she began a whole line of miniature cats – or "Blue Kitties."

Works by Kirchner regularly can be found at the Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea, located at 200 Artisan Way, just off Interstate 75 at Berea, Exit 77. The center's exhibits, shopping and travel information areas are open daily, year-round, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., and the cafe is open from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Admission is free.

The center currently features works by more than 650 artisans from more than 100 counties across the Commonwealth. Two special exhibits, "The Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea: Celebrating 10 Years," is on display through Aug. 24, and "Connected by a Thread: Quilts by the Kentucky Six+," is on display in the lobby through June 29. For information about the center's events call 859-985-5448, visit us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/kentucky.artisan.center, or go to the center's website at www.kentuckyartisancenter.ky.gov.

The Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea is an agency in the Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.



Erica Kirchner works to cut copper into animal sculptures at the Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea